

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The following recommendations are made in light of the 1968 U.S. Department of Interior Secretarial Order creating the PMWHR, the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, and the BLM national policy for the Wild Horse and Burro program. In short, these state that the wild horses should be managed as wild and free-roaming on the one hand, and on the other, managed without causing any impairment to the land's productivity. This is an apparent dilemma. Considering this and given the current downward trend, severe erosion, rangeland in the at risk to unhealthy categories, and the very low similarities of the vegetation to potential, the following recommendations are presented for consideration in order to improve the feral horse habitat conditions and reverse habitat deterioration:

1. Consideration could be given to repairing and utilizing the mid-mountain water catchments to provide improved distribution of feral horse grazing.
2. It is recommended that consideration be given to managing the herd within the range given (45 to 142 horses) in the "Results and Discussion" section based on the selected scenario.
3. Consideration could be given to controlling water sources in order to deny or permit access to water by feral horses. This would allow for growing season rest and reproduction of the forage plants, much in the same way that wildlife must be protected from disturbance in order to allow for reproduction and herd health. A type of buck and rail fence may be a possibility for control. This fence is more aesthetically pleasing and more fitting with the wilderness study area environment. In addition, it could provide for the passage of wildlife while controlling water access to feral horses.
4. A grazing rotation is recommended for consideration. Overgrazing is a problem and potentially, undergrazing could be a problem if grazing was eliminated. It could be designed to allow for vegetative recovery following grazing, and seasonality of grazing could be somewhat controlled. This would allow for the greatest range recovery for the benefit of the horses in the shortest period of time.
5. The previous considerations would also increase the noxious weed resistance of the range. Improved native vegetative cover would enhance wilderness, wildlife, and habitat values and create a more aesthetically pleasing environment. Presently, noxious weeds are not a severe problem on the PMWHR, other than Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*) in the areas receiving 10 inches MAP or less. However, the conditions are right for an explosion of noxious weeds.
6. If available, consideration could be given to expanding the range accessible to the feral horses. However, unless recommendations one through three are considered, it is very likely that the present grazing impacts would be extended to the newly acquired lands without improving the existing habitat.